

# Romaine Seeks Ban on Horseshoe Crab Harvesting Within 500' of Town-Owned Waterfront Properties

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**Farmingville, NY** - - On May 19, Supervisor Ed Romaine announced that he is seeking a ban on the harvesting of horseshoe crabs within 500 feet of all Town of Brookhaven parks and properties by the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC). He is also asking the eight waterfront incorporated villages within the Town of Brookhaven to join in requesting this ban as well. Pictured above are Department of Environmental Protection student intern Andrew Hochstrasser and Supervisor Romaine observing a two to three year old horseshoe crab during a press conference at the Town's Mt. Sinai Harbor Stewardship Center at Cedar Beach.

Supervisor Romaine said, "There are few Long Islanders who don't recognize a horseshoe crab when they see one, but if over-harvesting continues they could disappear from our bays and harbors. The DEC has the power to control horseshoe crab harvesting and I am asking them to take whatever steps necessary to ensure their survival into the future. A ban will provide a safe environment in which to continue their life cycle and maintain a healthy ecosystem."

Horseshoe crabs are one of the few animals whose prime harvesting season coincides with their spawning activities and they are being over harvested or illegally harvested in Town waters. The dwindling landings data published by the DEC is indicative of a fishery that is impaired and on the cusp of collapse. We are currently in the midst of harvesting season for the crabs, which extends from the first full moon of May to the first full moon of June. Many are caught moving inshore to spawn or during spawning when they are most vulnerable to capture.

In the Chesapeake Bay, many of the crabs are captured for bleeding, their blood used to make limulus amebocyte lysate. This chemical is used to detect the presence of gram negative bacterial endotoxins in drugs and intravenous solutions. However, on Long Island, these animals are being harvested for whelk and eel bait and the dwindling landings data published by the DEC is indicative of a fishery that is impaired and on the cusp of collapse.

The Supervisor will request the horseshoe crab harvesting ban through a resolution at the May 21 Town Board meeting. In a letter to the incorporated village mayors, the Supervisor said "with the cooperation of our South Shore villages, we should be able to protect the natural shoreline that they need for spawning areas, reduce the accessibility of the crabs to the baymen, and allow a natural increase to the population."

**Division of Public Information \* Office of the Supervisor**

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